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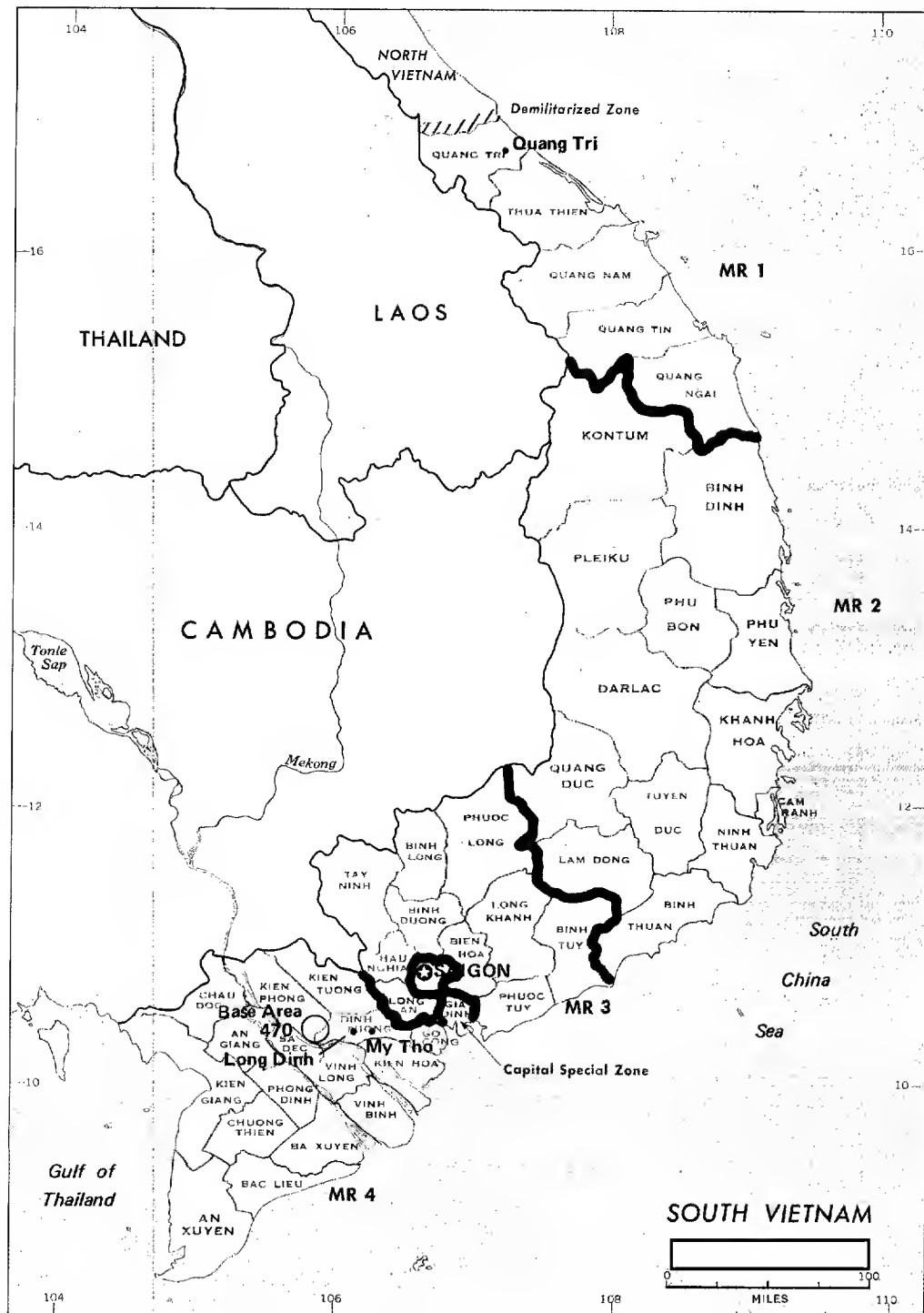
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VIETNAM: Fighting has slackened around Quang Tri City.

[South Vietnamese airborne elements are still in the southwestern section of the city, but their further advance has been delayed by artillery attacks and the well-entrenched Communist defenders. Other airborne forces south of the city have also been subjected to shelling attacks, and marine units to the east and northeast report light ground contacts.]

[Action elsewhere has been light, except in the northern Mekong Delta where heavy fighting continues in Dinh Tuong Province. Enemy troops entered Long Dinh, eight miles west of the provincial capital at My Tho and attacked the district headquarters there. The region commander believes that this action together with the Communists' efforts to clear the area around their nearby Base Area 470 are designed to draw government forces away from border areas in Cambodia and to open infiltration corridors to the delta.]

* * * *

Xuan Thuy, North Vietnam's chief negotiator, arrived in Paris yesterday amid further indications that the Communists will stick to their standard negotiating demands in the first of the new public sessions on Thursday. At an airport press conference, Thuy condemned US bombing and reaffirmed Hanoi's commitment to the Viet Cong's seven points, but he asserted that the Communists would "gladly examine any new proposals from the US." In other recent statements, Communist spokesmen have been adhering to a hard line on negotiations, calling

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for an end of the US bombing and mining and rejecting the possibility of a cease-fire without a political solution. Thuy also indicated that Le Duc Tho, chief adviser to North Vietnam's negotiating team, would be returning to Paris, but he did not specify a time.

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CHINA-INDOCHINA: Peking appears to be hinting that the time for a negotiated settlement of the war has come.

In a banquet speech to a visiting Yemen (Aden) delegation on 9 July, Chou En-lai, citing recent developments in Korea, Japan, and the Indian sub-continent, claimed that the demand for reasonable settlement of mutual disputes had become "an irresistible trend" throughout the world. This emphasis on reasonableness and mutual accommodation was also apparent in an NCNA article on 6 July commenting on President Nixon's recent news conference. The article stated that it was still necessary to see "whether the US Government is prepared to end the Vietnam war through negotiations" without specifying that Washington must follow Hanoi's negotiating scenario to achieve this end.

Chinese propaganda remains strongly critical of US actions in Indochina and continues to demand that the US withdraw rapidly and completely from the peninsula. On the political issues involved in a possible settlement, however, Peking comment is far more ambiguous--as it has been for some time. The NCNA article on the President's news conference, for example, set forth Hanoi's position on this thorny question in reasonable and nonpolemical terms, but carefully refrained from endorsing the North Vietnamese view.

Chou En-lai's speech to the visiting Yemenis was even more intriguing with respect to the political issue. Although he called in standard generalized terms for a cessation of US support to President Thieu, Cambodian President Lon Nol, and the "Laotian rightists" as well as for a US military withdrawal from Indochina, Chou pointed out that the recent agreement between the North and South Koreans and the Indian-Pakistani accord on partial troop withdrawal had been reached without the "superpowers"

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control and interference." A People's Daily editorial of 8 July on the Korean negotiations makes a similar point.

This hint that Peking sees advantages in political talks between Hanoi and Saigon without direct US participation strongly suggests that China may be urging North Vietnam to look again at the US proposal for an immediate cease-fire followed by an eventual political settlement to be worked out directly by the two Vietnamese parties.

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PAKISTAN: Rioting in Karachi and other cities in Sind Province is unlikely to threaten the stability of the national government, but the language issue that sparked the unrest will be a continuing problem for local authorities.

Urdu speakers took to the streets shortly after the Sind provincial legislature on 7 July passed a bill making Sindhi the official provincial language. Parts of Karachi--where about half the people are Urdu speakers--were placed under curfew on 9 July, but this proved ineffective. Yesterday the curfew was extended to the entire city and police were told to shoot to kill violators. Troops have been called in, and over 40 people have been killed in the province. (President Bhutto, who met with both Sindhi and Urdu speaking leaders, has appointed a four-member cabinet committee to seek a solution to the language conflict.)

Security forces believe the situation is worsening, but presently expect to be able to lift the curfew in two or three days. The government's security efforts presumably have the backing of the Sindhi-speaking majority in the province. This language issue is confined to the Sind and the violence is unlikely to spread to other provinces.

Urdu--the mother tongue of only 7.6 percent of the Pakistanis but the most widely read language--is the official language of the country and of three of the four provinces. In these provinces, where few speak Urdu as a first language, it is generally thought of in literary terms as a lingua franca.

Most Urdu speakers--primarily immigrants from India in 1947--live in the cities of the Sind, and Sindhi speakers have long believed these refugees

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held a disproportionate share of power in the province. President Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party draws most of its support in the Sind, Bhutto's home province, from Sindhi-speakers. Since coming to power the party has sought to enhance the status of Sindhis at the expense of the refugees. [REDACTED]

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USSR-SYRIA: Syrian President al-Asad's four-day visit to the USSR reflected the gradually warming atmosphere between Moscow and Damascus.

The only agreements signed during the visit concerned economic matters, including the establishment of a bilateral commission for economic and technical cooperation. A Soviet Foreign Ministry official had remarked before the visit that the talks would concentrate on economic affairs, and the Syrian delegation was comprised primarily of economic officials. The USSR, Syria's chief source of capital for economic development, provides credits for railroad construction, petroleum exploration, and several smaller projects. A \$133-million credit was extended in 1966 for construction of the Euphrates Dam, which is proceeding at peak levels with more than 1,000 Soviet technicians.

The Soviets reportedly have been pressing a reluctant Damascus for a friendship treaty. The Syrians were highly critical of the Soviet-Iraqi friendship treaty, but its signing in April increased the pressure on Damascus to accede to such an agreement as well. Moscow's interest in a treaty with Damascus may be shown in the communiqué that records Soviet-Syrian readiness to expand cooperation and to "continue consultations...at various levels on all important international questions."

Unlike documents signed with Egypt and Iraq, the Soviet-Syrian communiqué failed to condemn "anti-communism and anti-Sovietism." Instead, the Syrians agreed to language calling for the "consistent struggle against any attempts aimed at undermining friendship and cooperation between

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socialist countries and Arab states." The communiqué did not mention the Confederation of Arab Republics, which has never received Moscow's endorsement. There was, moreover, no reference to UN Security Council resolution 242, which calls for Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist and Israel's return of the territories it occupied in 1967.

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PHILIPPINES: President Marcos has won an important victory in his campaign to retain political power beyond 1973, but some significant hurdles still remain.

On 7 July, the constitutional convention, which was organized last year, voted to replace the presidential system with a parliamentary form. Marcos favors such a system because it will circumvent the two-term limitation under the present constitution. Marcos also believes he could more easily be elected prime minister by the legislature than president in a nationwide contest.

The margin of victory in the crucial vote indicates that Marcos is still in control of the constitutional convention despite the recent political scandals over the bribing of delegates by agents of Marcos. While pushing through adoption of the parliamentary form, Marcos forces defeated opposition efforts to ban Marcos from running for public office in the future. The working draft of the article on the new form of government must now be submitted to the convention for discussion and amendment before a final version can be voted upon, but Marcos should have little difficulty getting the kind of document he wants.

Not all of Marcos' problems are solved, however. A new constitution must still be ratified by a national referendum, and the President's fading popularity may result in the rejection of a constitution too closely identified with him. Moreover, there is no certainty that Marcos' Nacionalista Party would win a majority in the new National Assembly. The party lost six out of eight contested senate seats to the opposition Liberal Party last November. Marcos blames the defeat on party complacency, but it is more likely that the results reflected the widespread popular disillusionment with him personally.

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ISRAEL: The threat of a major confrontation among the political parties has been sharply reduced.

Prime Minister Meir has agreed to a request from her key coalition partner, the National Religious Party (NRP), that it be permitted to abstain on a Knesset vote on the imposition of stricter religious requirements for immigrants. The measure, which Mrs. Meir opposes, was introduced by a small ultraorthodox religious party, and the NRP had been tempted to support it. Mrs. Meir's permission for the NRP to abstain allows it to stay in the coalition and eliminates a possible showdown that could have resulted in her resignation, the formation of a new government, or new elections.

The proposed immigration measures were introduced in reaction to a pending bill to provide for civil marriages. The dispute over the civil marriage bill is still very much alive. The bill is sponsored by the Independent Liberal Party--the smaller partner in the coalition--which is still determined to press forward with it. Should the Liberals persist, it now appears that Mrs. Meir will force them out of the coalition. The Liberals have only four Knesset seats, and Mrs. Meir can govern effectively without them.

The prime minister is still faced with possible defections from the MAPAM section of her own Labor Alignment by those who want to vote for the civil marriage bill. According to a Labor Party spokesman, the current status of negotiations is "not good." Given Mrs. Meir's willingness to compromise, however, and the fact that neither MAPAM nor the Labor Party want to break up the Alignment or risk new elections, the chances of an accommodation seem good.

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ARGENTINA: President Lanusse has taken a large political risk in suspending the Peronist labor confederation and challenging Juan Peron to return for the presidential elections.

Reacting to a political statement from the General Labor Confederation (CGT) meeting in Buenos Aires, Lanusse has suspended the legal status of the organization and frozen all of its bank accounts. The CGT, which represents nearly all organized labor, had warned the military government of a violent revolution if the will of the people is frustrated in the election next March. The government's heavy-handed response to the CGT declaration could provoke strong labor retaliation, but Lanusse appears to have reasoned that the union leaders will not risk losing their funds permanently by further antagonizing the military.

The government's action against the CGT may also be related to Lanusse's challenge to Peron to return from exile in Madrid by 25 August if he wants to be a candidate in the presidential election. The sanctions would greatly reduce the Peronists' ability to organize massive demonstrations in the event that Peron did return and, if the freeze on funds continues, deprive the Peronists of a valuable source of campaign money.

President Lanusse's major gamble is that the old dictator, reluctant to tackle Argentina's serious problems and fearful of assassination, will not come back. Lanusse was applauded when he seemed to take himself out of the presidential running and then issued his challenge to Peron in a speech to top military officers last Friday, but the applause could turn to anger and serious plotting if he has misjudged Peron.

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CHILE: Political maneuvering is focusing on elections as the government Popular Unity (UP) coalition strives to overcome its minority electoral image.

Although the UP won last week's politically important student elections at the University of Chile, it still pulled only 43 percent of the votes. Its prospects are somewhat better in a legislative by-election on 16 July in one of its strongholds against a candidate supported by all opposition parties.

Splits in the coalition divided its majority vote in the still undecided labor confederation elections six weeks ago. The Christian Democrats claim to have won a plurality in Santiago Province, where nearly half the confederation membership is concentrated.

Both government and opposition forces now have formed electoral federations for the most important elections, those next March for all national deputies and half the senators. Overcoming Socialist objections, the UP has formed a single electoral group. The opposition, unable to solve its many conflicts, registered two electoral federations by the 7 July deadline. This division poses little threat to a continued opposition majority in both houses, but serves President Allende and the Communist Party's desire to keep their adversaries at odds.

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